

CONTINUING EDUCATION FOR  
REGISTERED ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SPECIALISTS  
FUTURE REGULATIONS

The Department of Health Services (DHS) is authorized to develop regulations establishing the requirements and standards for continuing education of Registered Environmental Health Specialists (REHS) pursuant to Health and Safety Code section 106705. Upon the recommendation of the Environmental Health Specialist Registration Committee, DHS is proposing to adopt continuing education standards for REHS. The regulations will require a minimum of twenty-four (24) contact hours of continuing education as a condition for the biennial registration renewal for REHS. REHS are employed by state and local organizations to monitor and enforce environmental and public health laws and regulations. Continuing education will assist in maintaining the competency of REHS in the dynamic field of environmental health. The proposed regulations would adopt new sections 65800, 65801, 65802, 65803, 65804, 65805, 65806, 65807, 65808, 65809, 65810 and 65811 in Title 22, Division 4, Chapter 23, Article 1, California Code of Regulations.

California Code of Regulations, Title 22, Division 4, Chapter 23, Article 1, Sections 65800-658011 as follows:

Section 65800. Definitions

(a) 'Accreditation Agency' means an organization approved by the department with the authority to designate continuing education providers as recognized providers.

(b) 'Department' means the California Department of Health Services.

(c) 'Recognized Provider' means a provider of continuing education courses that meets the provisions of section 65804 and is designated by the accreditation agency or department.

NOTE: Authority cited: Sections 106610 and 106705, Health and Safety Code.  
Reference: Section 106705, Health and Safety Code.

Section 65801. Continuing Education Requirements for Renewal of Environmental Health Specialist Registration.

(a) Each registered environmental health specialist shall submit with the application for renewal proof, satisfactory to the department, that during the last renewal period he or she has completed a minimum of 24 contact hours of approved continuing education.

(b) All registered environmental health specialists shall retain their certificates of completion issued by recognized providers in accordance with section 65804 for five (5) years following completion of the program.

NOTE: Authority cited: Sections 106610 and 106705, Health and Safety Code.  
Reference: Section 106705, Health and Safety Code.

Section 65802. Contact Hour Requirements

(a) A contact hour shall be equivalent to at least 50 minutes of participation in an organized learning experience.

(b) For courses not presented in “contact hours” but in college units or Continuing Education Units (CEUs), the following conversions shall apply:

(1) 1 CEU equals 10 contact hours.

(2) 1 quarter unit equals 10 contact hours.

(3) 1 semester unit equals 15 contact hours.

NOTE: Authority cited: Sections 106610 and 106705, Health and Safety Code.  
Reference: Section 106705, Health and Safety Code.

Section 65803. Accreditation Agencies

(a) The following organizations are approved by the Department of Health Services as a continuing education accreditation agency:

- (1) The California Environmental Health Association
- (2) The National Environmental Health Association
- (3) The California Conference of Directors of Environmental Health

(b) Upon written application to the department, any other organization will be approved by the department if:

(1) the organization submits a plan demonstrating that it has the capacity to evaluate each continuing education provider in accordance with the following criteria:

(A) Topics and subject matter shall be pertinent to the scope of practice for a registered environmental health specialist. Acceptable topics and subject matters for continuing education shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

- 1. food protection.
- 2. solid waste management.
- 3. liquid waste management.

4. medical waste management.

5. water supply.

6. housing and institutions.

7. bathing places.

8. vector control.

9. hazardous materials management.

10. underground tanks.

11. air sanitation.

12. safety and accident prevention.

13. land development and use.

14. disaster sanitation.

15. electromagnetic radiation.

16. milk and dairy products.

17. noise control.

18. occupational health.

19. rabies and animal disease control.

20. recreational health.

21. bioterrorism.

22. emergency preparedness.

23. lead poisoning.

24. cardiopulmonary resuscitation.

25. epidemiology and communicable diseases.

26. public health.

27. environmental health administration and management.

(B) Each continuing education course shall have written educational goals and specific learning objectives which are measurable and which serve as a basis for an evaluation of the program's effectiveness.

(C) Speakers shall be competent in the subject matter and shall be qualified by education, training and/or experience.

(D) Each continuing education course shall have a syllabus, which provides a general outline of the course. The syllabus shall contain at a minimum, the instructional objectives for each course and a summary containing the main points for each topic.

(E) When an approved provider works with others on the development, distribution and/or presentation of continuing education programs (joint sponsorship), there shall be procedures to identify and document the functions of each participating party.

(F) Promotional materials and advertisements shall include sufficient information to determine:

1. the educational goals and specific learning objectives of the program.
2. the nature of the targeted audiences that may best benefit from participation in the program.
3. the speakers and their credentials.

(G) An evaluation mechanism shall be used. The mechanism shall allow all participants to assess their achievement in accordance with the program's learning objectives. Self-evaluation mechanisms may include, but are not limited to, pre- and post-testing, post-testing along with group discussion and critique of answers, case-study discussions and problem solving exercises. The provider shall also develop a mechanism for each participant to evaluate the continuing education course.

(H) Where the method of educational delivery does not translate into contact hours, such as home study programs and other mediated instructional approaches, there shall be procedures for the determination of hours of credit for courses. Procedures used to determine the amount of time required for participants to successfully complete the program shall be documented and defensible. Acceptable procedures include:

1. assessing the amount of time the activity would require if it were delivered in a more formal and structured live program format; or,
2. pilot testing the activity with a group of registered environmental health specialists who are representative of the target audience and ascertaining the mean average length of time for completion for only those participants who successfully complete the program; or,
3. determination by an advisory panel, consisting of individuals qualified by experience and training in the development and administration of continuing education.



(l) The provider shall be required to maintain records of each enrollee's participation in continuing education programs.

1. For live programs, acceptable documentation of participation includes attendance rosters, sign-in sheets, completed program evaluation forms, or signed verification forms.

2. For home study and other mediated instructional approaches--acceptable documentation of participation includes:

a. use of a post-testing procedure in which a pre-established proficiency level is established and certificates are awarded only upon attainment of the pre-specified minimum proficiency level;

b. in the case of study groups, the successful completion of the program may be attested to by all participants; or

c. completion and submission, by the individual participant, of a written evaluation or critique of both the program and its applicability to environmental health. The evaluation shall be of sufficient length and detail to demonstrate successful completion of the program and a reasoned consideration of its applicability to environmental health.

(2) The organization agrees to perform the following:

(A) Maintain a list of the names and addresses of the persons designated as responsible for the provider's continuing education program. The accreditation agency shall require that any change in the designated responsible person's identity shall be reported to the agency within 15 days of the effective date of such change.

(B) Notify the department of names, addresses and responsible party of each provider.

(C) Respond to complaints from the department, providers or from registered environmental health specialists concerning activities of any of its approved providers or their coursework.

(D) Review at least a ten percent (10%) sample of coursework, as determined by the department, but not less than one course per year offered by each provider approved by the agency for compliance with the agency's requirements and requirements of the department and, on request, report the findings of such reviews to the department.

(E) Take such action as is necessary to assure that the continuing education coursework offered by its providers meets the continuing education requirements of the department; and

(F) Verify attendance of registered environmental health specialists at specific presentations upon request of the department.

(c) Substantial failure of an approved accreditation agency to evaluate continuing education providers as set forth in (b)(1) or to perform in accordance with the terms of its agreement as described in (b)(2) shall constitute cause for revocation of approval by the department.

NOTE: Authority cited: Sections 106610 and 106705, Health and Safety Code.  
Reference: Section 106705, Health and Safety Code.

Section 65804. Requirements for Recognized Providers

(a) Anyone seeking to provide continuing education courses as a recognized provider for registered environmental health specialists shall apply to a department approved accreditation agency for recognition as a provider prior to offering any such courses.

(b) Upon satisfactory completion of the accreditation requirements of the accreditation agency and receipt of written approval therefrom, a continuing education provider may represent itself as a California recognized provider of continuing education material for registered environmental health specialists.

(c) The provider is responsible for assuring the educational quality of its coursework. Coursework shall be relevant to the scope of practice for a registered environmental health specialist. All continuing education coursework shall be:

(1) accurate and timely;

(2) presented in an orderly fashion conducive to the learning process;

(3) complete and objective, and not reflecting predominantly the commercial views of the provider or of anyone giving financial assistance to the provider;

(4) specifically applicable and pertinent to the scope of practice for a registered environmental health specialist; and

(5) based on stated educational goals and objectives.

(d) All providers shall furnish certificates of completion to all enrollees. The certificate shall contain the name of the enrollee, name and number of the provider, title of the course, number of completed hours, date of completion, expiration date of the coursework, course number, if applicable and the name of the accrediting agency.

(e) Each recognized provider shall notify the accreditation agency, on forms approved by the department, within 15 days of the first time each new continuing education course is offered or presented.

(f) All providers shall maintain records of attendance at or completion of their continuing education programs for five (5) years.

NOTE: Authority cited: Sections 106610 and 106705, Health and Safety Code.  
Reference: Section 106705, Health and Safety Code.

Section 65805. Coursework from Non-Recognized Providers

a) Non-recognized providers or registered environmental health specialists may petition the department to allow continuing education credit for specific coursework which is not offered by a recognized provider but meets the standards of relevance to the scope of practice for a registered environmental health specialist and educational quality, as set forth in subdivision (c) of section 65804.

NOTE: Authority cited: Sections 106610 and 106705, Health and Safety Code.  
Reference: Section 106705, Health and Safety Code.

Section 65806. Coursework Approval for Providers

(a) Unless denied by the accreditation agency upon audit, all pertinent coursework offered by California recognized providers is considered as approved in California.

(b) On a random basis established by the department or in response to complaints about a particular provider or requests by the department, the accreditation agency shall review selected coursework. Within 15 days of receipt of written notification, the provider shall submit to the accreditation agency all material deemed necessary by the department to review the course. The material shall be forwarded to a reviewer to judge the quality of the program on the basis of factors established by the accreditation agency in addition to those defining relevance to the scope of practice for an environmental health specialist and educational quality, as set forth in subdivision (c) of section 65804.

(c) A recognized provider's coursework shall be valid for up to three years following the initial presentation.

(d) A recognized provider's advertisements for approved coursework shall clearly indicate the provider's name, the coursework's number of hours, date of expiration, the provider number assigned by the accreditation agency and the name of the accrediting agency.

NOTE: Authority cited: Sections 106610 and 106705, Health and Safety Code.  
Reference: Section 106705, Health and Safety Code.

Section 65807. Provider Audit Requirements

Upon written request from the accreditation agency, relating to an audit of coursework, each recognized provider shall submit such materials as are required by the accreditation agency.

NOTE: Authority cited: Sections 106610 and 106705, Health and Safety Code.  
Reference: Section 106705, Health and Safety Code.



Section 65808. Exemptions

Registered environmental health specialists may seek exemption from the continuing education requirements for registration renewal on the grounds of emergency or hardship by applying to the department in writing, on a form provided for that purpose, setting forth the reasons why such exemption should be granted. Exemptions may be granted for such reasons as illness, military leave, or full-time enrollment in a graduate program. Inactive retired registered environmental health specialists, as described in Health and Safety Code section 106695, are exempt from the continuing education requirement.

NOTE: Authority cited: Sections 106610 and 106705, Health and Safety Code.  
Reference: Section 106705, Health and Safety Code.

Section 65809. Continuing Education Credit for Instructors

Instructors may receive continuing education credit (one time only) for classes they teach.

NOTE: Authority cited: Sections 106610 and 106705, Health and Safety Code.  
Reference: Section 106705, Health and Safety Code.

Section 658010. Revocation

Substantial failure of a continuing education provider to meet the requirements set forth in section 65804 shall constitute cause for revocation of approval by the accrediting agency or department.

NOTE: Authority cited: Sections 106610 and 106705, Health and Safety Code.  
Reference: Section 106705, Health and Safety Code.

Section 65811. Complaint Mechanism

A provider may request reconsideration of any adverse action taken against the provider or its coursework. Following such reconsideration, the provider may request review of the accreditation agency's decision by the department.

NOTE: Authority cited: Sections 106610 and 106705, Health and Safety Code.  
Reference: Section 106705, Health and Safety Code.